RUTGERS REVIEW

VOLUME 58 ISSUE 1

Hello RR readers, my name is June and I am a Senior and the Design Director of this magazine. Over my four years at Rutgers, I have had the privilege of designing for four issues of the Rutgers Review. I remember showing up to meetings in my Sophomore year, designing flyers and social media posts, and now designing whole magazine spreads. I often say that "life is absurd, so we should bask in the absurdity and laugh," and I think my college experience and my experience at the RR reflect that. Not everything goes according to plan and instead of resenting that, I have learned to take what I have and make the most of it. I have gone from designing magazines all on my own, to working with an amazing team of graphic designers. I am proud of the work I have done and everything my team has accomplished. I hope you enjoy reading this magazine!

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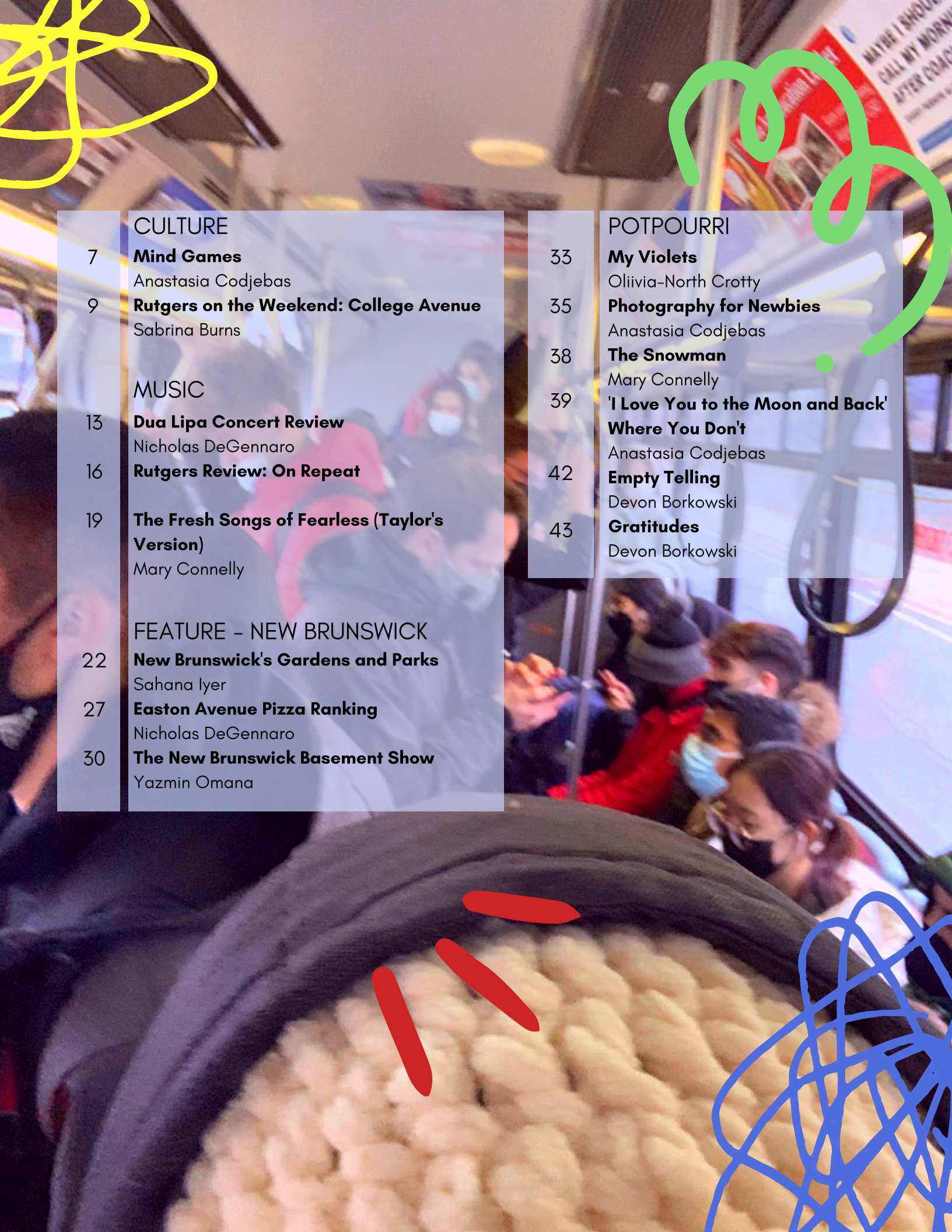

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FEATURES

Hi, I'm Anastasia! I am a Junior and the next Design and Art Director! Finally coming back out of remote learning at the beginning of this school year made me yearn for a community outside of school that would let my creativity go wild. In high school I was part of its magazine, too – an immensely rewarding experience that had us all creating toward a physical culmination of all our hard work. The idea of coming back to my old ways really excited me, so I joined the Rutgers Review. The RR experience has exceeded my expectations for how worthwhile my commitment to it would be. Out of all the extracurricular commitments I have tried out, it's the one I always look forward to the most. It is the common ground for all the things I love – design, photography, art, and storytelling, in a space of other creatives with brilliant ideas. Beyond excited to spend my last year creating more beautiful publications with this team! :)

Hi, my name is Nick! I am a Junior and the Marketing Director and Graphic Designer for this magazine. Over this past year, working with the Rutgers Review has been an absolute blast! One of my goals for this year was to get published, and RR helped me do just that. I have not met a group of more creative and talented individuals. I am so thankful for the creative output that RR has allowed me to have. I cannot wait to see what my senior year has to bring with RR.

Hi I'm Yazmin! I'm a sophomore at Rutgers and am studying English, Comparative Literature, and Film Studies. My first year at The Rutgers Review has been such an informative and growing experience for me. As the semester is coming to a close, I am so excited to continue working, writing, and thinking alongside all of the writers, graphic designers, and artists within this team, and am overjoyed to continue this journey as a section editor next year! I intend to continue writing and publishing articles for The Rutgers Review the next two years I'm at Rutgers, and am so grateful for what this magazine has provided me – above all else, the space to be creative and artistic is not something taken for granted.

CULTURE

Mind Games

By Anastasia Codjebas

Sometimes we don't realize the power that words have over us - spoken or written, out loud or in our heads, directed to ourselves or directed to others. Words preached through any form and to anyone inevitably become reality without your realization. Speaking from my experience, I have always let worry, fear and anxiety consume me, accepting it as the way I am and my way of life. I know how difficult it is to break out of any negative mental cycle that convinces someone to accept the wrong reality about their lives. Hence, when we do realize these negative patterns and try to eradicate them, it is natural to experience resistance and hesitation; we are challenging what we have deemed to be our safe space, regardless of how detrimental it may be to us. However, with hard work and determination, you can rewrite yourself a new reality- one that will serve you well and pave the way to a more positive and uplifting life. Our brains will always remember the information it receives the most. Therefore, it is important to consciously choose to send the right ones.

Negative messages are unfortunately ubiquitous. They are embedded in self-deprecating jokes, or even worse, insults toward ourselves for all the ways that we think we are falling short. Self-imposed limitations make facing our challenges almost impossible. At times, for instance, I have convinced myself that I was shy, awkward, needy, boring, stupid, and lazy. Not funny enough, smart enough, and talented enough. Too much or not enough. And the list of self-deprecating thoughts is endless, as I am sure many other self-critics know. When you repeatedly feed your brain with one or more negative beliefs, it will actively seek evidence that validates these beliefs. As such is the case because when what you see doesn't align with your reality, you are challenged with feelings of discomfort. You experience doubt and uncertainty. If you have convinced yourself to believe in something, only you can defy that belief.

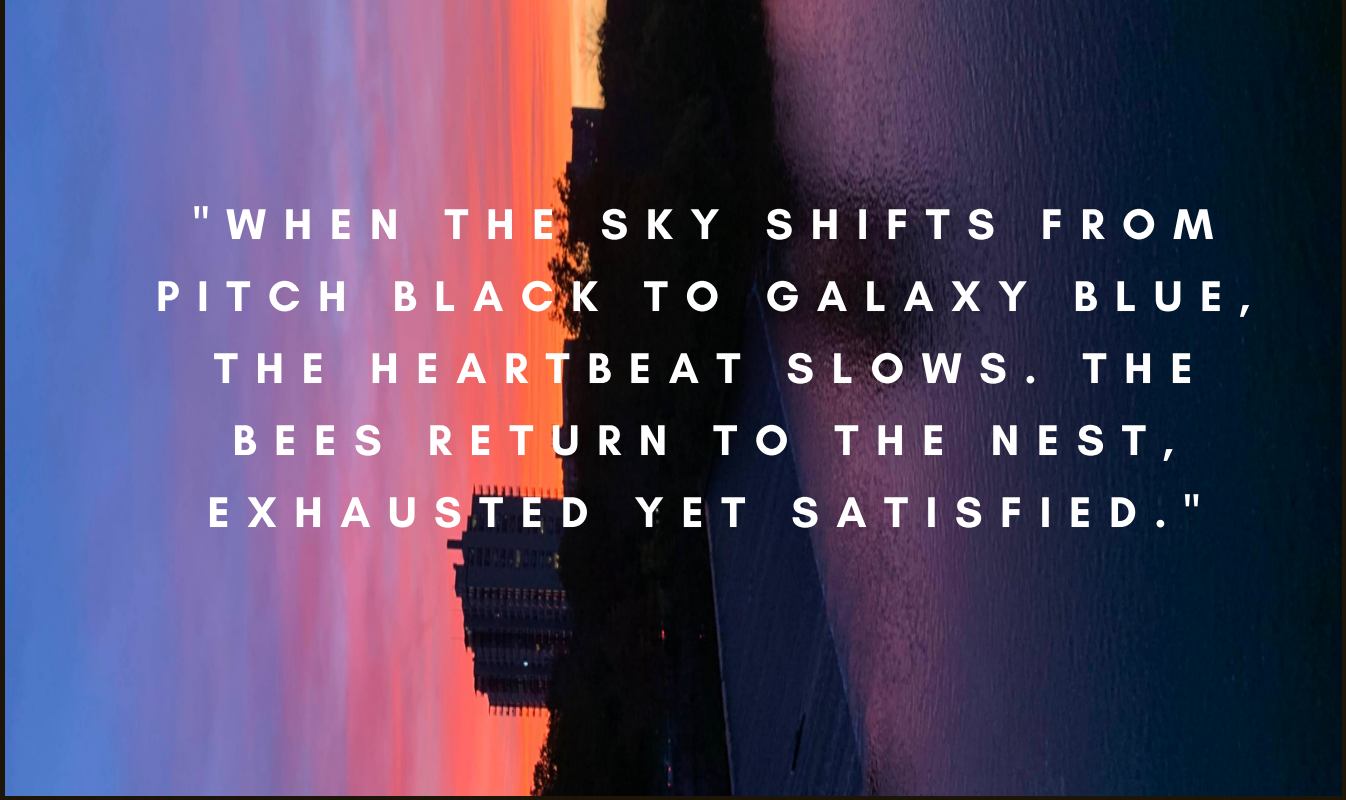
I have a lot to offer

I feel like the biggest hypocrite writing this considering I am nowhere near the place I want to be. However, this is all part of my journey in learning how to use my words wisely in order to convince myself, and hopefully you too, that a different reality is possible. No matter how hard it may be to manifest, it is possible to develop a healthier system of beliefs to fall back on (as long as it is learned and reinforced with consistency). For some people, it is achieved through practicing gratitude for their fortunes and privileges. For others, it is achieved through developing healthy self-care practices or reinforcing affirmations with journaling, reflecting, meditating, etc. Some suggestions that I can provide you with is to take negative words out of your vocabulary, internalize inspirational quotes, and avoid overusing media that makes it harder to escape the negativity. It is crucial to challenge and question anything that feels like a concrete reality to us; only then is change possible. If you feel that you are not in a good position in life, know that you can work yourself out of it by fighting one little negative thought at a time.

RUTGERS ON THE WEEKEND:

COLLEGE AVENUE

BY SABRINA BURNS



"WHEN THE SKY SHIFTS FROM PITCH BLACK TO GALAXY BLUE, THE HEARTBEAT SLOWS. THE BEES RETURN TO THE NEST, EXHAUSTED YET SATISFIED."

Upon closer examination, one will notice a metamorphosis in Rutgers, an Ouroboros cycle of college death, purgatory, and rebirth.

Thursday night begins the transformation. The fortunate few with a home nearby and non-existent Friday classes flee the sinking ship to safety (and flavorful food) elsewhere. College Avenue bursts into a flash of passionate extravaganza, a phoenix sensing imminent slumber as its golden life force bleeds out.

Every unfortunate soul on campus with an early bedtime *knows* how the dorms rattle with throngs of overstressed students in search of release. They dress up in ripped, low waist jeans, skin-tight tube tops, glittering eyeshadow, and that one pair of high tops they don't mind getting sticky. Then they plunge into the frigid sea of night, clutching onto each other, laughing in the drunken stupor of youth. Booming frats promise sweet, free booze and crowded space for dancing and merrymaking.

Easton Avenue also provides ample opportunity for daring exploits in the New Brunswick city. With options galore, the heart of College Ave thrums overnight.

When the sky shifts from pitch black to galaxy blue, the heartbeat slows. The bees return to the nest, exhausted yet satisfied. Peace descends until the Honors College rings its clamoring bell at 9 am. Then it's Friday classes.

More students trickle away from the campus throughout the day. They abandon academic life, seeking the next greatest adventure far from New Brunswick and the confinements of urbanity. Rutgers labors in its breathing, desperate to capture the crackling magic of the night before. But must Friday night pass into Saturday morning, stripping away beloved amenities like library study spots, College Ave gym classes, and Cafe West food from the remaining population. As all good things come to an end, so goes College Ave's spirit, finally laid to rest for the weekend.

The air is a weight in one's lungs. Straggling friends cling to one another to stave off the campus' empty touch. The silence rings everywhere. All the stores are closed. Weekend buses are few and infrequent between snack sessions, and time ticks at a glacial pace. There's nothing to do alone on a weekend!

Yet, Rutgers is far from total death. Eternal ashes promise new life in the budding, serene atmosphere. Fewer people dot the landscape, there's more room to think. The biggest shower stalls are free, not only in the wee hours before the partiers wake up. Music rises higher, unabated by judging ears and tongues. Creativity is chosen over homework; paradoxical liberation of the mind and entrapment of the body.

Brower is surprisingly populated and homey with its extended breakfast. The Academic Buildings likewise echo with singing voices as choir groups practice their pieces.

Saturday becomes Sunday, and the flames of excitement burn brighter despite Monday's looming shadow. Student clubs pick up the scattered persons, returning focus to their schedules. Sororities and frats camp in front of the Student Center, conjoling passerby for alms to a worthy cause. Students flock to Alexander Library, soaking in the communal sensation of mutual suffering. At night. Debbie's 8 pm Brower Hour elicits claps and groans from the cafeteria body.

Soon the adventurers return home to the Raritan, refreshed after their out-of-town escapades, bags bustling and reluctant smiles on their faces because they're back. College Avenue hatches again, nourished by energetic movement, youth, and passion.

In the star glow and fuzzy moonlight, almost everyone settles in for the night. Come the cursed chiming of the Monday morning anthem, Rutgers springs from the cinders to life. All is restored to its former, glorious chaos.

My name is Mary! I am a graduate student in the Master of Communication and Media Program. As an undergraduate student, I majored in Journalism and Media Studies and minored in Creative Writing. I have possessed a strong passion for writing ever since I was a child. Therefore, writing is a huge part of my life. When I came across The Rutgers Review during my sophomore year of studies, I instantly knew this publication would offer me ample opportunity to express my creativity through my favorite medium. I was welcomed with warmth and encouraged to share my ideas. I served as the Arts & Entertainment Editor from April 2020 to April 2021. As someone who is seeking a career in magazine editing, I found this position to be both rewarding and worthwhile. I am sad to be nearing the end of my time at The Rutgers Review and wish the next generation of members much success.

Ethan Ross captured by Anastasia Codjebas

MUSIC

DUA LIPA CONCERT REVIEW

BY NICK DEGENNARO

Four years ago, if you asked someone what they knew about Dua Lipa, they'd probably pull up a meme video of her shaking her leg, dancing to her song, "One Kiss." That viral video cemented itself into Dua Lipa fan culture and pretty much all sectors of the internet. Unfortunately, it branded Dua as someone who "lacked stage presence", "couldn't dance", and "wasn't a great performer". Today, in 2022, Dua Lipa tours her worldwide sold-out, Future Nostalgia Tour.

The Future Nostalgia Tour consists of 85 shows and 5 legs, several of which were rescheduled from before the pandemic had canceled live events in 2020. After attending the March 4th show at the Prudential Center in Newark, NJ, I can assure you the two year delay was worth the wait.

"..... TWO-YEAR DELAY WAS WORTH THE WAIT"

From the start of the show, Dua Lipa had an abundance of stage presence, high energy dance routines, and a stage fit for a pop superstar like herself. The show opened with a 1980s workout-themed video introduction of all of her dancers. It was nice to see an artist give her dancers recognition right out of the gate. As her dancers entered the stage, Dua rose from beneath the floor and kicked off the concert with her 2019 hit, "Physical". I couldn't help but put my phone down, be in the moment, and scream and jump with the 16,000 other fans in that arena. It was clear that everyone was there to have a good time right from the start. Dua then moved on to "New Rules", a song that is many times recognized for kickstarting her career before hitting a few Future Nostalgia album tracks like "Cool", "Love Again", and "Break my Heart".

Being in the arena for these first few songs was electric. It was a different experience than many other concerts I had been to. The fact that the Future Nostalgia album was released in the height of the pandemic two years ago gave fans plenty of time to memorize the lyrics to pretty much every song on the setlist. No song was a filler song. The entire concert was lively and upbeat, and I recognized that right from the start. It was going to be a fun night.

The second act of the show began with a roller skating performance by two incredible performers followed by a more subdued slew of songs including "Good in Bed", "Fever", "Boys Will Be Boys", and "We're Good", which featured a larger than life lobster clawing at Dua. Yes, a larger than life lobster.

In the third act, the show picked up again with more classic bangers from Future Nostalgia. Elton John popped on the big screen for their duet "Cold Heart" as Dua swayed a pride flag and hugged her dancers. This act led into the chart topping song, "Levitating", where Dua literally was levitating. She flew around the arena suspended from the ceiling as the entire arena sang the song which recently broke the record for the longest-charting song by a female artist on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, spending 70 weeks on the chart.

"THIS IS HANDS DOWN ONE OF THE BEST CONCERTS I'VE EVER BEEN TO."

The encore started with the album's title track, "Future Nostalgia" where Dua performed the entire song with a microphone stand rock-and-roll style with plenty of hairography and strobe lights. She closed the show with her Grammy-nominated hit, "Don't Start Now". This was hands down the loudest and most popular song of the entire show. It was an absolute all out party. Dua also reclaimed her iconic meme-worthy, leg-shaking dance move at the start of the song and the entire crowd went crazy as people all around mimicked the dance along with her. Confetti rained around the entirety of the arena as she closed out the party.

This was hands down one of the best concerts I have ever been to. After waiting over two years to hear one of my favorite albums live, I was absolutely enthralled by the whole experience. Besides looking incredible, Dua performed one of the most high-energy concerts I have ever been two. Every song was a moment. There was not an unstrained part of my vocal chords at the end of the night. I was struggling to speak on the ride home, and I would not have had it any other way. Dua Lipa has truly cemented herself as a pop powerhouse and the Future Nostalgia Tour is a testament to that. If I could see her every night, I would, and it would never get old. It was a night that I thought would never happen when the album came out in the height of the pandemic, but was absolutely worth the wait and every penny that went along with it.

Rutgers Review: On Repeat

"BINU" by BIBI

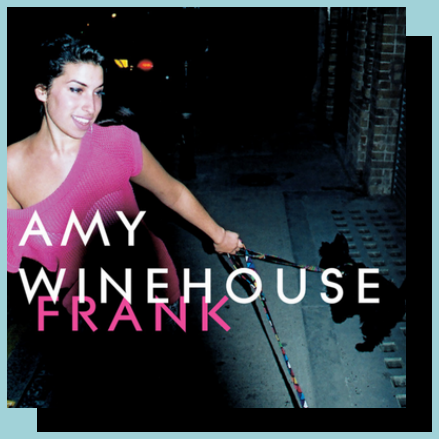
BIBI has been a recent favorite I found on Spotify; I listen to Korean low-fi when working, so I played a Spotify-generated playlist and found this artist. BIBI started as a SoundCloud artist and then appeared as a contestant in The Fan's SBS show. Her songs are a mix of Korean and English and often make puns in both languages. The word BINU(비누) means soap, but the song's context refers to "be new". This song is both relaxing, refreshing, and a great shower song. The song's lyrics have a hopeful vibe, how she washes away her mistakes, lies, and bad decisions with soap and starts fresh.

“Tangerine Dreams” by Snoh Aalegra

“The production on the song is not of this planet. I suppose you could say it came from somewhere in space or the future, and when paired with Snoh’s vocals, smooth, retro (definitely reminiscent of her biggest influence, Michael Jackson), it becomes this mélange of energies and emotions that make for a dream-like listening experience. Aside from that, Snoh’s lyrical capabilities are definitely at work here. She has a way of telling a story through her music, and though being very personal, she conveys the universal sense of longing for connection/love, the kind that leaves you wanting more. “

"Tainted Love" by Isaac Dunbar

Isaac Dunbar is an artist on the rise. I have been absolutely obsessed with him after discovering him early last year. I was lucky enough to see him on his first sold-out tour and meet him after the show. In this new song, Dunbar details a story of animosity in love, “holding everything in and then exploding”. He sings about going to a bar, “Anubis”, and after hearing this song, I want to go too. Dunbar perfectly combines disco and pop. Want a song to vibe to? This is the one to listen to. Want a song to bop around and dance too? This is the one for you. I can already tell this will be in my Top 5 at the end of the year.



"I Heard Love is Blind" by Amy Winehouse

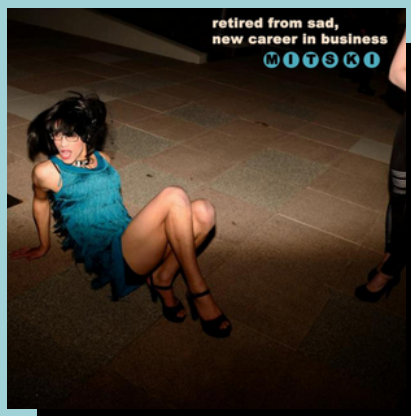
"I Heard Love is Blind" by Amy Winehouse is one of my favorite songs. The song is about Amy justifying her infidelity, but the lyrics and music elicit such a happy feeling. What I love about this song is how timeless it is; taking inspiration from classic artists like Frank Sinatra, Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughn, and Erykah Badu. You can really hear Amy's inspirations embedded within the song with its elements that mix so many genres together. My favorite part is the beautiful flutes; together with the rest of the instruments remind me of Spring!

"Other World Coffee" by Olivia North-Crotty & Nodan.

A song about post-heartbreak about the kind of sadness that permeates every part of your day while you slowly break away from the failed relationship. You wonder why things happened the way they happened, and how the hell did they move on so fast?

"Bangladesh" by Nodan.

Thank you so much for this opportunity to do a little promo for my music. I've never had anything like this before and I'm grateful. Here's my latest song Bangladesh. It's a dance track that I had old drafts of for years. If you've ever had a story or project floating in the back of your mind for that long and you finally get it out, you know it's the most amazing breath of fresh air ever. I hope you enjoy it. - Nodan.



"Strawberry Blonde" by Mitski

Unrequited love just hits differently here, Mitski is in no need of any more praise than she's already received, but I'll give it to her anyway. With its upbeat folky melody and modern-fairytale feel, the song adds to the sweet sadness that is loving someone so deeply and knowing they deeply do not care about you in the same way. In fact, they love someone else, and all you can do is keep your eyes on the road in front of you and peek a thousand times more at their strawberry blonde hair, even when you know it'll kill you over and over again each time.

"open arms" by November Ultra

Her voice is so deep and powerful, yet so warm, soft, comforting. Music to fall asleep, study, take bubble baths, or cry to, just take your pick! I have been listening to her new album on repeat since it came out because it's rare that I find a voice to be so soothing, especially with the effects she uses to make her voice fill up your space, as if from very far away, and a unique touch of incorporating other languages. This is one of my favorite songs because she adds very ambient vocals to a song about a deep connection to someone, but that also pertains to a lot of her others :)

"Hold You Tight" by Benjamin Amaru

Thank God for Discover Weekly! It makes me feel sad thinking about a time a special someone thought this way about me, but no longer does. It is the greatest, warmest feeling giving yourself to the other person and them giving themselves to you, but the worst when it all falls apart.

THE FRESH SONGS OF FEARLESS (TAYLOR'S VERSION)

BY MARY CONNELY

On April 9, 2021, Taylor Swift released *Fearless (Taylor's Version)*. The album consists of 26 tracks—20 re-recordings of previously released songs and six which are new to the public's ears. These six tracks are referred to as being "From The Vault." As with *Red (Taylor's Version)*, Swift did a superb job capturing the unique essence of the original *Fearless* while making minor adjustments and enhancements in sound quality. Thus, the tracks remain nearly identical to their original versions. Like other fans, I appreciate Swift's choice to remain authentic and stand by her original art while also including subtle improvements. Her outstanding artistic choices truly attest to Swift's everlasting authenticity that prevails despite her constant musical evolution.

The six added songs in Fearless (Taylor's Version) are not so "new" to Swift. They contain lyrics written over a decade ago when she was just around 19 or 20 years old. Now with the release of Fearless (Taylor's Version), fans can enjoy these masterpieces for the first time. Tracks No. 21 and 22 are arguably the two most recognizable pieces from the radio out of the new tracks.

"You All Over Me," featuring Maren Morris, is a sultry song about heartbreak, reminiscence, and realization that a relationship was not meant to last. Morris' light vocals pair beautifully with Swift's smooth-yet-powerful voice. Following that track, "Mr. Perfectly Fine" is widely speculated to be about Swift's highly publicized past relationship (and the 27-second voicemail breakup that followed) with Joe Jonas. For many, this breakup bop is a walk down memory lane. It pairs perfectly with long car rides with your equally-Taylor-obsessed best friend (with the windows down, of course).

Track No. 23, "We Were Happy," is what I believe to be the saddest and most heart-wrenching song on the entire album. This tear-jerker tells the story of a once blissful relationship that has since come to an end. The couple had made multiple big plans for the future, and Swift wrestles with the pain of letting go. Track No. 24 is titled, "That's When," and features Keith Urban. This duet is both catchy and meaningful. Swift and Urban harmonize wonderfully together, and I hope he returns for collaborations on future *Taylor's Version(s)*.

Swift and Urban harmonize wonderfully together, and I hope he returns for collaborations on future Taylor's Version(s). Underneath its dreamy aura and lovely vocals, "Don't You," Track No. 25, stands as another gut-wrenching piece. Swift sings about not being over an ex who claims to still be friends and the pining feelings that follow this type of situation. Listeners can hear the raw emotion in Swift's voice as she delivers lyrics such as, "Don't you say you've missed me if you don't want me again / You don't know how much I feel I love you still." The final track on the album, No. 26 titled "Bye Bye Baby," is a bittersweet send-off. The upbeat instrumentals work well, even though the lyrics are more sorrowful than cheerful. Swift deals with the conflicting emotions that come with leaving an ill-fitting relationship that no longer suits her happiness. Deep down, she knows she is making the right decision. Yet, the choice is still a difficult one that brings anguish to both her heart and head. I think this song serves as a strong "goodbye" track that is both a literal farewell and an end to the album.

Fearless (Taylor's Version) is just the start of the next phase of Swift's career, as she is in the process of re-recording her first six studio albums. So far, only Fearless (Taylor's Version) and Red (Taylor's Version) have been released, as well as the song "Wildest Dreams" from 1989 (Taylor's Version). Thus, many fan theories point to 1989 (Taylor's Version) being next in line, but there is no way to know for sure until Swift shows us her next move. I am certainly not alone when I say I am excited to hear what she has in store for us next!

FEATURE

NEW BRUNSWICK

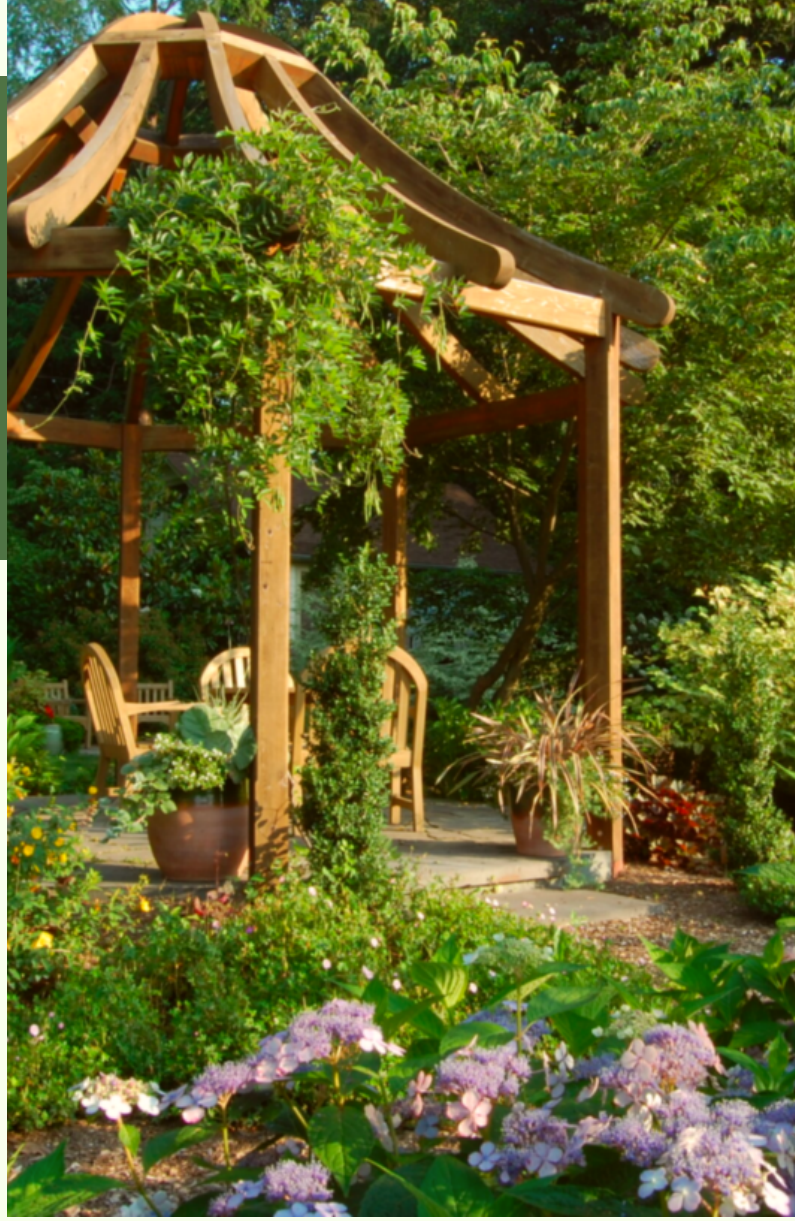
NEW BRUNSWICK'S GARDENS AND PARKS

BY SAHANA IYER

Do you enjoy being amid beautiful flora and fauna, or prefer taking brisk, afternoon jogs? Whatever your choice, you have plenty of options. All of New Brunswick's parks and gardens serve different purposes; some have playgrounds and trails while others have scenic pavilions. Botanical gardens and athletic fields are among these natural environments. Here is a comprehensive list of my favorite parks and gardens I believe are worth a visit (especially if you are seeking to immerse yourself in nature). Conveniently, all listed parks are near or on Rutgers' campuses-a bonus to those without cheap, easy means of transportation. I hope this article encourages you to visit any one of these extraordinary oases and reconnect with the outdoors!

RUTGERS GARDENS

Location: Outskirts of Cook Campus–112 Ryders Lane, North Brunswick Township, NJ 08902



Rutgers Gardens is (as the name suggests) a part of Rutgers University. It is a 180-acre botanical garden that houses natural habitats, gardens, a farmer's market, and a student farm. There is no entry fee, and the garden is open year round from 8am to 5pm except on Mondays and national holidays. Dogs are welcome in the park too. Rutgers Gardens is truly all encompassing. Walking trails are plentiful and the area is spacious–highly conducive for peaceful walks. The garden also allows for picnics and social gatherings; in fact, many weddings are held here. As the warmer days approach, the blooming magnolia trees and a rainbow display of perennials will be a sight to behold. I personally adore the bamboo forest; the green stalks of bamboo add to the exquisite flora.

"RUTGERS GARDENS IS TRULY ALL-ENCOMPASSING. WALKING TRAILS ARE PLENTIFUL AND THE AREA IS SPACIOUS–HIGHLY CONDUCIVE FOR PEACEFUL WALKS. THE GARDEN ALSO ALLOWS FOR PICNICS AND SOCIAL GATHERINGS"

The only qualm I have with the garden is its inaccessibility without a vehicle; I do not recommend walking from Cook to Rutgers Gardens as US 1 stands between the two places. The busy highway is too dangerous to cross on foot, so it is best to carpool with a friend.

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY ECOLOGICAL PRESERVE

Location: Part of the Livingston Campus- 83 Rockafeller Rd, Piscataway, NJ 08854

The ecological preserve is a great place to hike, bike, walk, and run. The wildlife deserves particular notice. On my last visit, I saw a cute turtle and deer. The preserve is a wonderful place to disconnect from the overstimulating world. However, if you are directionally challenged like me, I suggest using trail maps for careful, efficient navigation. The trails are well marked and well maintained, yet somehow, I began at the Orange trail and ended up at the Yellow trail which is not connected to the Orange trail- you have to traverse the Green trail from the Orange trail to reach the Yellow trail.

No vehicular transportation is required to reach the Rutgers Ecological Preserve- the Green trail begins behind Quad 1 on Livingston.

BUCCLEUCH PARK

Location: 321 Easton Ave, New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Getting to Buccleuch is easy from College Ave: walk past the College Ave gym towards the Air Force ROTC building. Once you pass the Air Force ROTC building, you cross a traffic light, walk some more, and turn right when you see a walking pathway leading into the park.

Buccleuch is not marvelous; it has the fundamental structures of a park with a playground/ outdoor gym, soccer and baseball fields, and a tennis court. Despite being near College Ave, the vibe at Buccleuch is completely different-it maintains a suburban feel amidst an urban setting. I am a runner and live on College Ave. I prefer to run outside because it is better for my legs than treadmill running and Buccleuch provides me a place to do so, especially when I go to run in-between classes. I feel safe running there as the park is often filled with families, youth sports teams, and other people exercising. Buccleuch is not the most exciting destination, but it is adequate for basic outdoor activities.

JOHNSON PARK

Location: Johnson Park Rd, Piscataway, NJ 08854

I discovered the true vastness of Johnson Park on a run. The 478 acre park rests on the banks of Raritan River on the opposite side of College Ave. Johnson park is a perfect location to go on long runs and bike rides. The scenery is absolutely gorgeous with trees swaying in the wind and the Raritan River glistening in the sunlight, reminiscent of the sparkling Seine. Moreover, playgrounds and picnic areas spice up the mundane college environment.

For most visitors, the small zoo is the main highlight. The animals-pigs, goats, alpacas, deer, and mini horses-are kept in an enclosure. At first, I enjoyed seeing the animals, but on closer examination they looked quite miserable. I do not believe they are well maintained, which is disheartening. Other than the unethical zoo, Johnson Park is a great escape from fast-paced college life.

The Elmer B. Boyd Park and Boyd Park (both adjacent to one another) are small parks. Therefore, I will discuss them together as one park. Unfortunately, the park's location is unfavorable, nestled between Route 18 and the Raritan River. Reaching it may be a troublesome task. However, I appreciate the park for its picturesque backdrop of New Brunswick. The couple of times I visited the park, the river and towering skyline shimmered in the sunset's glow. Both places are ideal for scenery photography, but otherwise unsuitable for most activities.

ELMER B. BOYD PARK

Location: New Brunswick, NJ 08904

RECREATION PARK

Location: Rutgers University (Part of the Cook/Douglass Campus) – New Brunswick, NJ 08901

To all the skateboarders, Recreation Park is your dream come true! There is a concrete skate park that offers space and safety to aspiring skateboarders. Recreation Park is well applauded in the New Brunswick community because it provides the locals an accessible, outdoor area to enjoy time with their kids.

Though the walk from Cook/Douglass to the Recreation Park may seem tedious and even scary depending on the time of day, the park is family friendly and a true paradise in a primarily urban city. It features a water spray area, an uncrowded basketball court, and a playground. Parking lots are also available-cars are the preferable alternative to walking. Without a group of friends, the park's facilities are not magnificent. A positive experience will be better achieved with a group to skateboard/play basketball with.

DONALDSON PARK

Location: 526 S 2nd Ave, Highland Park, NJ 08904

Donaldson Park is Johnson Park 2.0. Located in Highland Park, it borders the Raritan. Unfortunately, it is not within walkable distance from College Ave, like Johnson Park. Vehicular transport is required to visit the park. Paying for transportation is worth it though. Donaldson Park has diversified facilities: tennis courts, dog parks, basketball courts, playgrounds and picnic areas. There are open fields of grasses which allow for ranged sports like frisbee and soccer. The wide fields were perfect for an invigorating game of ultimate frisbee with my friends when we visited the park last summer. Moreover, there are numerous parking lots. Donaldson's 90 acres allow for extended running, walking, and biking. The park is absolutely gorgeous with abundant greenery and a mini lake, especially during sunset. I can confidently say it is one of my favorite parks. It is well-maintained, spacious, and relaxing- the perfect New Brunswick outdoor destination!

Easton Avenue Pizza Ranking

By: Nicholas DeGennaro

We've all done it. Stumbling into one of the many pizzerias lined along Easton Avenue for a quick slice is a Rutgers student's favorite pastime. But which one is the best one to grab that slice at? During the Spring 2021 semester, a majority of the on-campus dining options were closed, leaving me with no choice but to explore the options that Easton Avenue had to offer. One day, I took it upon myself to collect a slice of a plain cheese pizza from each of the pizzerias along Easton Avenue and decided to rank them for fun. As someone who's 100% Italian, I don't want to say detecting a good slice of pizza is like second nature, but I'd like to think I have a pretty experienced pizza palette. I'm fully aware that people may have their own opinions, but these are mine. Enjoy them (or don't).

7. KNIGHT'S

Honestly, this is my absolute least favorite slice of pizza in the area. The pizza tastes like it's straight out of a cardboard box from Walmart and they stick it in a microwave oven. The thickness of the slice lends itself to an at-home pizza rather than one that's tossed and freshly made in a pizzeria. The cheese also tastes like it's straight out of a bag and is nothing compared to some of the other clearly fresh shredded mozzarella that the other places on the list have. They have great small personal pie pricing options, but as far as the best tasting slice, it's not my favorite.

Favorite Secondary Menu Option: Mac n Cheese Bites

6. JIMMY'S

Jimmy's disappointed me with my slice. I could tell by my first bite that I was probably eating last night's leftover slice. The cheese had congealed into one chewy sheet, and the sauce was very thick and mushy. It was a mildly unenjoyable slice. I heard great things about Jimmy's; the workers were very kind and my friend eating right next to me really enjoyed his personal White Pizza pie with Ricotta cheese. However, my plain cheese slice did not cut it.

Favorite Secondary Menu Option: White Pizza

5. PJ'S

PJ's is one of the only spots on Easton that closes before the nighttime rush of drunk students. If you want this place, you're gonna have to grab it before 10 or 11pm. My slice from PJ's was no less than an average slice. It just wasn't how I prefer my pizza to be cooked. It was a little crispy and slightly well done on both sides. As someone that enjoys more of a fluffy, lightly cooked pizza, this one just wasn't for me. PJ's also had the greasiest slice on the list. It leaked through the bag. It's definitely the slice that healthier pizza eaters might dab with a paper towel or napkin to remove the grease.

Favorite Secondary Menu Option: One of their Pasta Dishes

4. GIOVANELLI'S

This pizza place on the corner of Condict Street can truly either be a hit or miss. The plain cheese slice is pizza is nothing to rant or rave about. It's just a pretty basic plain slice of pizza. The crust is a little flavorless and comes across a bit bland; almost so bland that it's noticeable. However, I have had their specialty Barbecue Chicken Slice and it was leaps and bounds better than the plain cheese. Several of my friends have had similar experiences, noting that their specialty slices are better than their originals. If you dress up the pizza with some pepper, oregano, and garlic, it's a pretty good slice, but nothing to rant or rave about. It's okay, but there's definitely better options.

Favorite Secondary Menu Option: Barbeque Chicken Pizza

3. R.U. GRILL & PIZZA

JR.U. Grill & Pizza will give you another classic slice of New York style pizza. The slices are thin, the crust is fluffy and a little doughy, and they are generally perfect to light on the sauce. I know this is a pizza ranking, but I also have to give a shout out to their fat sandwiches; a great alternative to RU Hungry. The ambiance of walking in surrounded by photos of drunk Rutgers students plastered on the walls is a plus.

Favorite Secondary Menu Option: Mac n Cheese Bites on a Fat Sandwich

2. PIZZA CITY

A cheap, but nearly perfect slice. If you like a thin, lightly cooked, cheesy slice, Pizza City is for you. Coming in cheaper than any other pizza on the list, a standard $2.50 slice from Pizza City will get you exactly what you've been looking for. The slice, although thin, was slightly larger than the others and the cheese on top was perfectly coated almost all the way to the crust. If you're a crust person, be forewarned that it is smaller than the others because of this. I was thoroughly impressed. Crossing that awkward intersection in front of the store is definitely worth the trouble for a slice here.

Favorite Secondary Menu Option: Tacos

1. DANIEL'S

Daniels has the best slice of pizza on Easton Avenue. Hands down. If you want the most authentic New York-Italian slice of pizza this place has it. You may pay an extra dollar or two, but for the size of the slice, the thinness of the crust, and the flavor of the sauce and cheese, it's beyond worth it. Many people will say Daniel's is the best pizza, and they're definitely right.

Favorite Secondary Menu Option: Vodka Sauce Margherita Slice

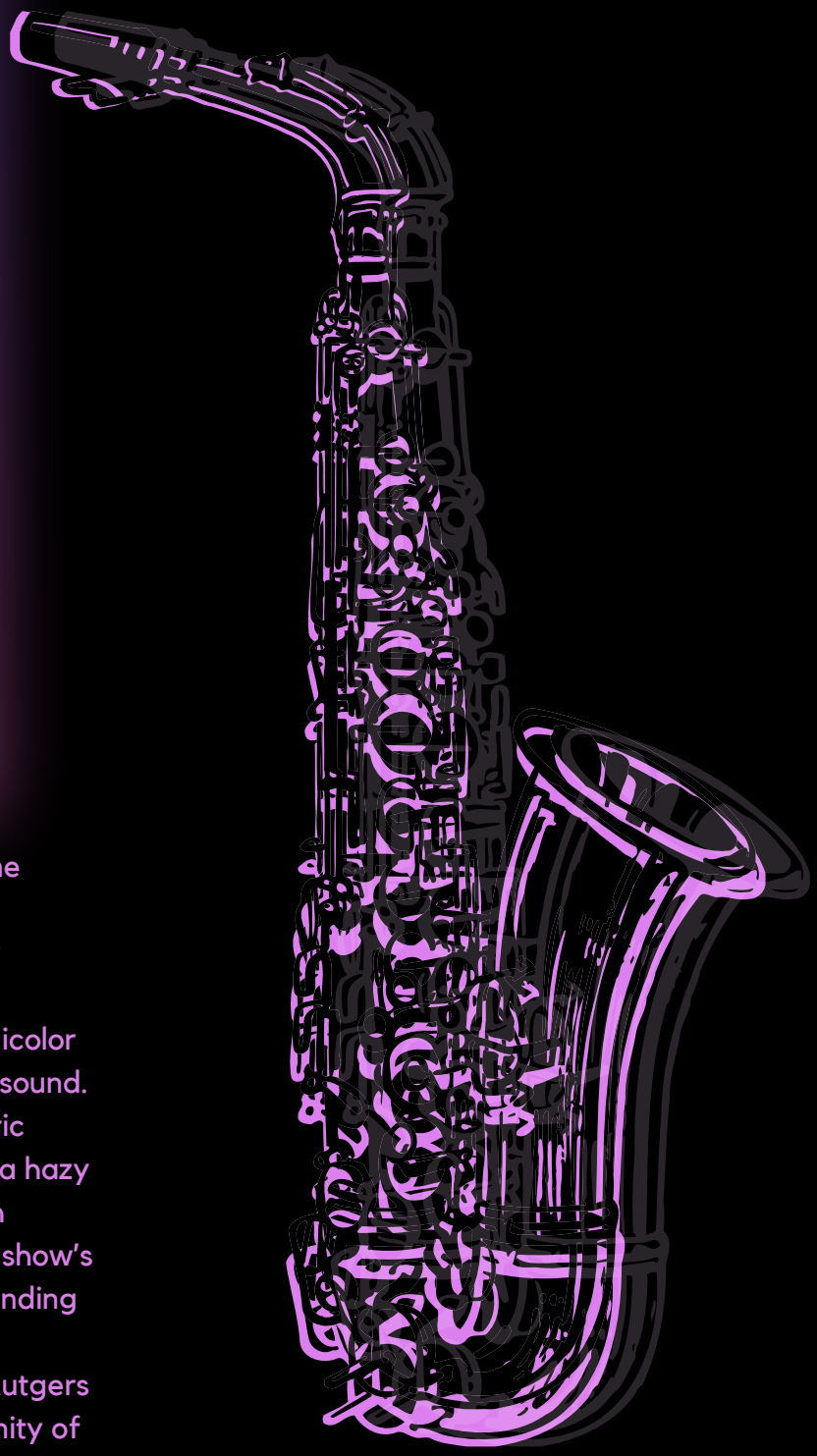
THE NEW BRUNSWICK BASEMENT SHOW

By Yazmin Omana

Scarlet dripping handprints splatter the dingy, pocketed concrete walls. They are covered in random colors of chipped paint, weird insignias, and graffiti. Towards the right side of the rooms is a blaring, red-lit room with an army of stacked-up chairs in the middle in the manner of a cult-like ritual. It also reeks like blue-raz e-juice. No, you haven't just entered a horror movie. It's a New Brunswick basement show – the Zoo in particular; just one of many that happen a few times a week. The usual New Brunswick show, a hallmark of Rutgers nighttime culture, resembles this image.

"HALLMARK OF RUTGERS NIGHTTIME.."

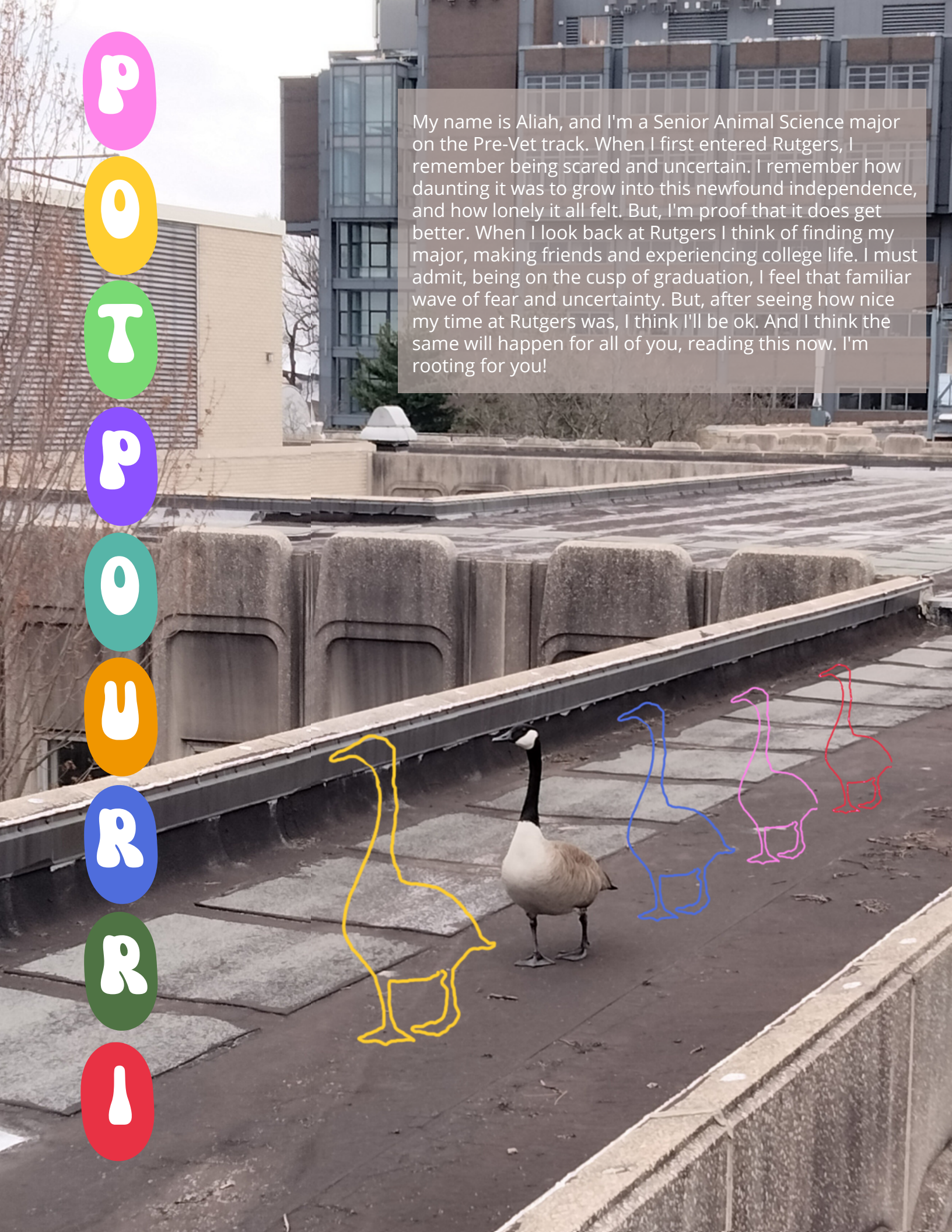
The Zoo in particular – a wonderland of veiny pipes, wires, and chords – douses you in emerald lights and suffocates you in giant, pulsing speakers. Half of the crowd, basking in phantasmagoric projectors, rocks during the intimate ten-minute sound checks in anticipation. The crackle of the drums signals the show is about to start – "back away from the speakers" – yet, people still place their hands on them to feel the music breathing. Apart from feeling the sonic vibrations and the buzzing of the room's heartbeat, the classic New Brunswick basement show's atmosphere is a trademark of Rutgers' nightlife.



Two of the bands who dominate this nighttime circuit, The Imposters and Plastic Gum, are frequently enveloped by the basement show community. The former, playing a handful of originals, complemented the seemingly technicolor lights display with their vibrating, guitar-led sound. The latter,Plastic Gum, another aching electric guitar crowd favorite, delivered their best— a hazy cover of Post Malone's "White Iverson." Both bands display the New Brunswick basement show's indie-rock obsession and adoration— transcending the threshold between grimy, underground concerts and weekend enlightenment. This Rutgers touchstone helms a devoted, weekly community of hundreds to thousands who disseminate throughout New Brunswick on the hunt for these experiences.

POTPOURRI

My name is Aliah, and I'm a Senior Animal Science major on the Pre-Vet track. When I first entered Rutgers, I remember being scared and uncertain. I remember how daunting it was to grow into this newfound independence, and how lonely it all felt. But, I'm proof that it does get better. When I look back at Rutgers I think of finding my major, making friends and experiencing college life. I must admit, being on the cusp of graduation, I feel that familiar wave of fear and uncertainty. But, after seeing how nice my time at Rutgers was, I think I'll be ok. And I think the same will happen for all of you, reading this now. I'm rooting for you!



My Violets

BY OLIVIA-NORTH CROTTY

There's a note missing when I
speak,
A sound I almost can't hear.
When I overheat and melt,
it's the only time
I know
it
is
still
there.

There's a scene I can't see,
'less I'm engrossed in my journal
And then I
remember it's me.
Only I can get the scene
to reveal itself when
I'm floating
fulfilled,
and free.

But the letters go missing
on their own.

And the rain
–my rain–
it drowns out my heartbeat.

And oh, how I long for you
to know,
hear, and see.
See Me,
Know me,
know me
please?

But I can't manage
to speak.

Why can't the birds fly out of my
head?
Flowers encasing my heart
are picked one by one
by my quivering pale hand
and thrown out
leaving nothing left.
'Nothing'
is all alone.

Why can't I let my violets
simply grow on their own?
Protecting them hurts more than
helps.
With every tear,
pull, touch, and repair,
I end up
tearing them
apart.

I make it worse.

Why can't I stop
making it
worse?

You deserve sunshine,
my violets.
You deserve water clear as skies.
Deeper than the word "love,"
Softer than silk,
But I fear you'll be ripped out of me by another.
I'd rather I be the one
to cut
you out.

But that's not self-care–
grooming,
cageing,
boxing,
worrying,
hiding.

You deserve light,
And I need to fight
for your
space
in this world,
and in mine.
When you grow in my chest,
You relinquish the anxious,
Filter every toxic breath.
But years of wearing
my heart on my sleeve
has given me scars
and they run deep.

Ego and child,
together, too wild
for me
to really get to know.
So I'll separate them,
Parallel and frame their stories,
until they're ready
to come out.

Until I'm ready
for my violets
to grow loud.

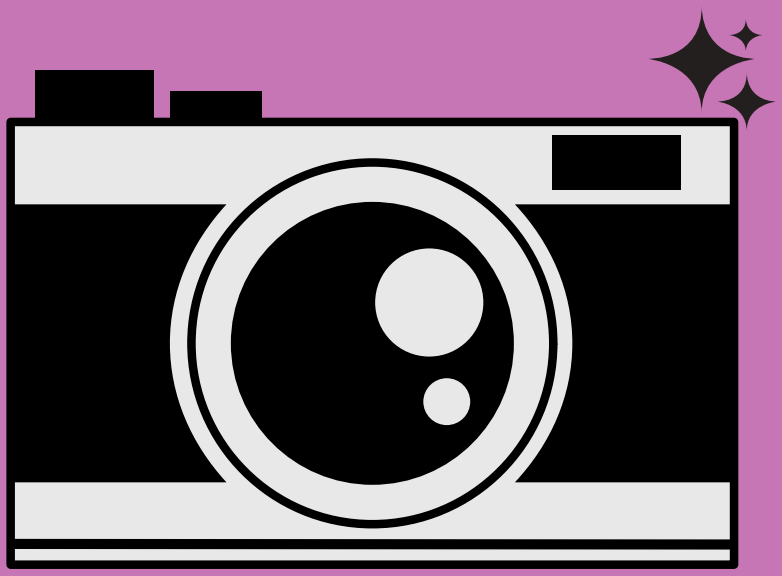
Until
my violets
are loved.

Photography for Newbies

By Anastasia Codjebas

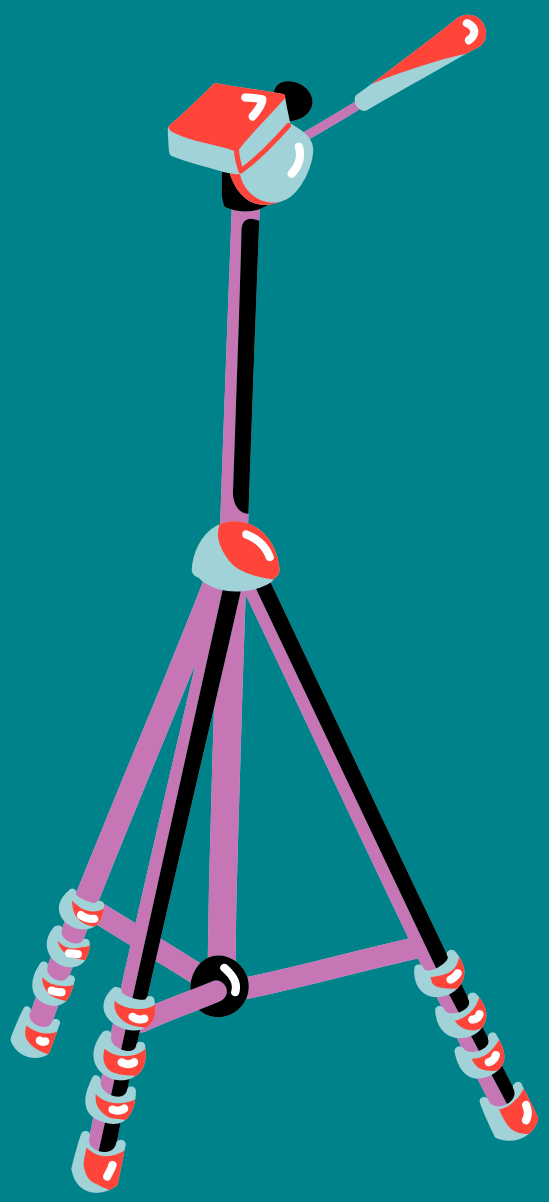
It may seem intimidating to get into photography in this day and age, seeing how many heavily edited photos bombard us at all times. This can easily mislead people into thinking that fancy cameras are the only way to capture beauty. But let's not forget that the first-ever photograph was taken in 1826! People have figured out ways to formalize it as an art form from the limited available resources at the time, which means so can you.

For starters, if you can't get your hands on a pricey DSLR camera, your cell phone will be your best friend. I first developed an interest in photography in 8th grade when I got my first smartphone. A majority of my photography skill development then came from simply exploring subject matter and framing that caught my interest. With that, you start to see what you want to do more of. The possibilities of using the phone camera can also be expanded by buying clip-on lenses for the phone, which will help you experiment with new perspectives for their reasonable pricing.



Check out my IG photo acc @visionastia :)

If you are lucky to have a DSLR, you will have access to many more tools than a phone can unfortunately offer. Pay special attention to the lenses you buy as the body of the camera itself is not as important as the lens. When you can get a DSLR, it is CRUCIAL that you start getting accustomed to all the settings. For the longest time, I was intimidated by the menubar and all the tiny little buttons. My fear though was a big impediment to improving my photos. One of the most important concepts of photography is understanding the light meter that tells you if the photo you're about to take will be under/over/well exposed.



In addition, understanding the codependent relationship between shutter speed (the time for which a shutter is open), f-stop (the size of the aperture opening), and ISO (the sensitivity of the sensor), will make your life much easier in the long run. To complete newbies, these words might be fully unfamiliar, but the internet will do a much better job expanding on them than I ever will. There are many other routes to photography, apart from using a DSLR. Certain film cameras are as complex as DSLRs, but simplified polaroid cameras, point and shoots, and disposables are all viable options as well that don't need many buttons and settings for you to use and create interesting photos with.

Regardless of your budget, investing in props and tools can help you improve the quality of your photos. A tripod bought for a phone or camera stabilizes your device and prevents blurry and shaky effects. Certain reflecting surfaces (gold and silver), along with absorbers, also regulate the light to act towards a desired effect. An absorber, for instance, when placed between the light source and subject, will prevent harsh highlights and shadows. All can be found in sets online. You can always get creative with other, DIY effects, such as coloring a piece of tape with a marker and then putting it over the flashlight for cool ambient lighting.

This brings me to the next point – the internet is your ultimate mentor for learning new tips and tricks. I have listened to many, many, MANY Youtube videos and other-sourced tutorials, most of which have taught me the unlimited possibilities of using things I have on hand. Over time, I got into photo editing, a topic that newbies often rely on for guidance. In this regard, Adobe's free, digital Lightroom app was a complete lifesaver for me. I still use it now because of how much it offers in improving my photos, as well as my skills with its tutorials and samples. I recommend starting with a simple program and afterward switching to something more advanced like the Adobe Creative Cloud. This will result in a smoother transition and overall better quality work.

Lastly, collaboration and experimentation are imperative for advancing your skills and distinct style. Through collaborations with friends, acquaintances, or strangers who volunteer to model for or photograph along with you, you will learn to direct your models and discover what type of work you gravitate towards, gradually developing your own unique style. It is impossible to grow without experimenting with different subject matter and genres of photography. So every time you are enticed to do something new, take up the opportunity. The experience will inevitably lead you to new discoveries and increased confidence in your abilities. Try everything you can in your photography journey. And most importantly, have fun!

The Snowman

By Mary Connelly

Spring air bleeds like water
When pinks and blues and yellows sprout to
remind me how good things only last a mere minute.
Two if you're lucky.

The truth is,
I miss you.
And everything and everyone.
Recollections recklessly float by like autumn leaves before a storm,
images I cannot catch.

Come find me
In a snow-white backyard,
an igloo built on the foundation of imagination,
A snowman with a smile wider than I could ever replicate.
At least not now.

And when I accompany the water
With hot air and sandy toes,
the waves thrash at my existence now-
They know I'm not the same anymore

Or have they just forgotten?

‘I LOVE YOU TO THE MOON AND BACK’ WHERE YOU DON’T

ANASTASIA CODJEBAS

Before I fell in love, I would see people say they want to spend the rest of their lives with their significant others. I would cringe seeing binding words like "forever," and think to myself, how can people so blindly believe in something like that? They have barely been together. We are so young, we still have yet to change so much throughout our lives. Such a fairytale is too good to believe. But then he came along and this time, I believed. I wanted my first love to be my only love, with my whole heart.

I realized how all these other young people whose relationships I've watched develop in the past felt. You *want* to believe that you will last, more than anything. For the first time in my twenty-year life, a person came along that made me feel and open up in ways I could never have imagined to be possible. The feelings you develop grow to be so intense that you can't help but daydream about going through college together, then living together, getting a shared pet, getting married, having kids, traveling the world, experiencing everything there is while having the warm comfort of your person by your side.

And now my person is no longer mine, and over a month later, I am still struggling to grasp this new reality. He still feels like my other half, I still feel that strong connection, so much love for someone who has become my favorite person in the world, but I can't call him that anymore, and it doesn't make any sense. Breaking up was always the worst-case scenario in my mind, but I never could have envisioned how painful and earth-shattering it would actually feel. Every day is a new cocktail of emotions. Every day, I pass things or places that remind me of him and our time together or imagine running into him and not knowing how I would feel or react.

There are times when I am so saddened and angry at him that I can't stop bawling my eyes out and spewing all the how's and why's that constantly circle back. Times when I blame myself for not being strong enough to overcome my fears and insecurities, for leading us to the outcome I'd been afraid of all along. Times when I try to tell myself that this really is for the best, but how can it feel that way when the person I have grown to be the most comfortable around is no longer around? Times when I get stuck in daydreams of him showing up at my doorstep with a grand gesture, and all this ending like one of those nastiest nightmares.

I have been a part of many amazing experiences and projects since then, but none that I can credit to being single, they would have happened either way. I can't speak for him, but it's not like I have suddenly grown a pair of wings. Just when I feel a little less heavy, the despair creeps up on me again and again and takes my strength away from wanting to show up. It's taken me forever to write this alone because every time I come back, I am reminded of how crushing it all is to accept. I want to escape from every aspect of my life and find myself in a distant part of the world, away from all the familiar people and places, and be all alone with my thoughts.

Maybe reading this will help whoever is reading, I can only hope, or maybe it is just something that I had to get out – a record of an experience that has taken a huge toll on me, for my future self to one day revisit, hopefully with a wiser understanding of life and loss, and lessons learned that make acceptance easier. But for now and until further notice, I will allow my heart to be broken.

EMPTY TELLING

I'm writing a ghost story
It's about you
Or it's about guilt
Because ghost stories
always are
And grief and loss and
longing
All the things love
leaves behind
It's about a love so big it
lingers
Past the point that it
does any good
I'm writing a ghost story
I hope it haunts you

Devon Borkowski

DEVON BORKOWSKI

GRATITUDES

We did not have a funeral.
I wore my grandfather's overshirt for a month
And talked to you every day
Though rarely about the absence
How I hate the word loss.

You did not mention the newly occupied urn
Only in my reaching out
I just fucking need you right now
Hiding behind
"I'm so sick of hearing I'm sorry"
If I could trust myself for nothing
I could trust you for that
You were never the gentling hand

Pull me out the ocean
Watch me cough seawater on the shore
The desire to drown lingers
There is not so much to swim towards
But you keep dry land beneath my feet
"Time does not give a fuck about your plans
And plans to be a dick as well"
Never gentle
Always kind

That night I sat with the phone 'twixt my knees
Held the back of my hand over my mouth
Face pressed to the bed while I heaved
You couldn't know how much I needed to hear it
That the world just doesn't care

You won't take to heart a thank you for this
For setting our tangled mess aside
Letting me laugh with the weight still on me
Letting it be ugly and messy
In every way that can't be helped
"That's what life is about, Dev. Hiccups and snorts."
While I wipe snot off my smile

I'll say here instead-
I hope you know
What it meant to me.

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